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# EPA announces rollback for some Biden-era limits on 'forever chemicals' in drinking water

By **MICHAEL PHILLIS**  
**Associated Press**

The Environmental Protection Agency said Wednesday that it plans to weaken limits on some "forever chemicals" in drinking water that were finalized last year, while maintaining standards for two common ones.

The Biden administration set the first federal drinking water limits for PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, finding they increased the risk of cardiovascular disease, certain cancers and babies being born with low birth weight. Those limits on PFAS, which are human-made and don't easily break down in nature, were expected to reduce their levels for millions of people.

Limits on three types of PFAS, including what are known as GenX substances found in North Carolina, will be scrapped and reconsidered by the agency, as will a limit on a mixture of several types of PFAS.

The Biden administration's rule also set standards for the two common types of PFAS, referred to as PFOA and PFOS, at 4 parts per trillion, effectively the lowest level at which they can be reliably detected. The EPA will keep those standards, but give utilities two extra years until 2031 to comply.



Logan Feeney pours a water sample with forever chemicals, known as PFAS, into a container for research, April 10, 2024, at a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lab in Cincinnati.

**Associated Press**

"We are on a path to uphold the agency's nationwide standards to protect Americans from PFOA and PFOS in their water. At the same time, we will work to provide common-sense flexibility in the form of additional time for compliance," said EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin.

The development was first reported by The Washington Post.

Large scale changes and utility pushback

It appears few utilities will be impacted by the with-

drawal of limits for certain, newer types of PFAS. So far, sampling has found nearly 12% of U.S. water utilities are above the Biden administration's limits. But most utilities face problems with PFOA or PFOS.

Health advocates praised Biden's administration for the limits. But water utilities complained, saying treatment systems are expensive and that customers will end up paying more. The utilities sued the EPA.

The EPA's actions align with some arguments in the utili-

ties' lawsuit. They argued the EPA lacked authority to regulate a mixture of PFAS and said the agency didn't properly support limits on several newer types of PFAS that the EPA now plans to rescind. They also sought the two-year extension.

Erik Olson, a senior strategist at the nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council, said the move is illegal. The Safe Water Drinking Act gives the EPA authority to limit water contaminants, and it includes a provision meant to prevent new rules

from being looser than previous ones.

"With a stroke of the pen, EPA is making a mockery of the Trump administration's promise to deliver clean water for Americans," Olson said.

President Donald Trump has sought fewer environmental rules and more oil and gas development. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin has carried out that agenda by announcing massive regulatory rollbacks. The EPA plans to loosen regulations for greenhouse gas emissions, cleanup standards for coal plant waste and car emission limits, among many other clean air and water rules.

Zeldin's history with PFAS is more nuanced; during his time as a New York congressman, he supported legislation to regulate forever chemicals.

Evidence of harm builds and so does the cost. Manufactured by companies like Chemours and 3M, PFAS were incredibly useful in many applications among them, helping clothes to withstand rain and ensuring that firefighting foam snuffed out flames. But the chemicals also accumulate in the body. As science advanced in recent years, evidence of harm at far lower levels became clearer. □

## Trump can't strip Foreign Service workers of their collective bargaining rights, judge says

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A federal judge agreed



The Harry S. Truman Building, headquarters for the State Department, is seen in Washington, March 9, 2009.

**Associated Press**

Wednesday to temporarily block the Trump administration from stripping Foreign Service employees of their collective bargaining rights.

U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman granted a federal labor union's request for a preliminary injunction that, while its lawsuit against the government is pending, stops the Republican administration from implementing a key portion of an executive order signed by President Donald Trump.

The American Foreign Ser-

vice Association, which represents more than 18,000 members of the Foreign Service, sued to stop the administration over the March 27 executive order. The union said Trump's order "upended decades of stable labor-management relations in the Foreign Service," removing all members at the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development from coverage of a law that gives them the right to organize and bargain collectively.

In his opinion, Friedman

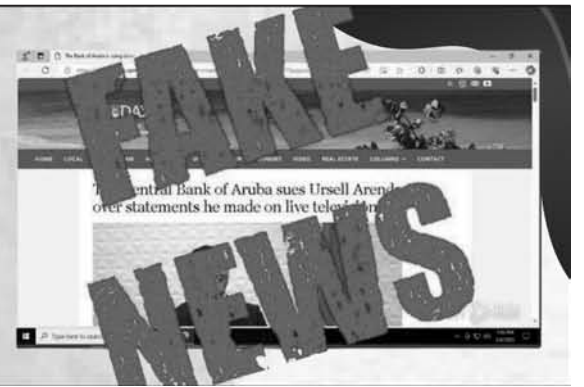
said "Congress could not have been clearer in passing the Statute that it intended for the protections of the Statute to extend broadly to the covered departments and agencies in the foreign service." Government lawyers said Trump determined that "agencies with a primary national security focus are being hamstrung by restrictive terms of collective bargaining agreements that frustrate his ability to safeguard the interests of the American people." □



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## U.S. overdose deaths fell 27% last year, the largest one-year decline ever seen

By MIKE STOBBE and GEOFF MULVIHILL

Associated Press

There were 30,000 fewer U.S. drug overdose deaths in 2024 than the year before the largest one-year decline ever recorded.

An estimated 80,000 people died from overdoses last year, according to provisional Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data released Wednesday. That's down 27% from the 110,000 in 2023.

The CDC has been collecting comparable data for 45 years. The previous largest one-year drop was 4% in 2018, according to the agency's National Center for Health Statistics.

All but two states saw declines last year, with Nevada and South Dakota experiencing small increases. Some of the biggest drops were in Ohio, West Virginia and other states that have been hard-hit in the nation's decades-long overdose epidemic.

Experts say more research needs to be done to understand what drove the reduction, but they mention several possible factors. Among the most cited:

- Increased availability of the overdose-reversing drug naloxone.

- Expanded addiction treatment.
- Shifts in how people use drugs.

- The growing impact of billions of dollars in opioid lawsuit settlement money.

- The number of at-risk Americans is shrinking, after waves of deaths in older adults and a shift in teens and younger adults away from the drugs that cause most deaths.

Still, annual overdose deaths are higher than



Signs are displayed at a tent during a health event on June 26, 2021, in Charleston, W.Va.

Associated Press

they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. In a statement, the CDC noted that overdoses are still the leading cause of death for people 18-44 years old, "underscoring the need for ongoing efforts to maintain this progress."

Some experts worry that the recent decline could be slowed or stopped by reductions in federal funding and the public health workforce, or a shift away from the strategies that seem to be working.

"Now is not the time to take the foot off the gas pedal," said Dr. Daniel Ciccarone, a drug policy expert at the University of California, San Francisco.

The provisional numbers are estimates of everyone who died of overdoses in the U.S., including noncitizens. That data is still being processed, and the final numbers can sometimes differ a

bit. But it's clear that there was a huge drop last year. Experts note that there have been past moments when U.S. overdose deaths seemed to have plateaued or even started to go down, only to rise again. That happened in 2018.

But there are reasons to be optimistic. Naloxone has become more widely available, in part because of the introduction of over-the-counter versions that don't require prescriptions. Meanwhile, drug manufacturers, distributors, pharmacy chains and other businesses have settled lawsuits with state and local governments over the painkillers that were a main driver of overdose deaths in the past. The deals over the last decade or so have promised about \$50 billion over time, with most of it required to be used to fight addiction.

Another settlement that would be among the largest, with members of the Sackler family who own OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma agreeing to pay up to \$7 billion, could be approved this year.

The money, along with federal taxpayer funding, is going to a variety of programs, including supportive housing and harm reduction efforts, such as providing materials to test drugs for fentanyl, the biggest driver of overdoses now. But what each state will do with that money is currently at issue. "States can either say, 'We won, we can walk away'" in the wake of the declines or they can use the lawsuit money on naloxone and other efforts, said Regina LaBelle, a former acting director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. She now heads an addiction and

public policy program at Georgetown University.

President Donald Trump's administration views opioids as largely a law enforcement issue and as a reason to step up border security. It also has been reorganizing and downsizing federal health agencies.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said overdose prevention efforts will continue, but some public health experts say cuts mean the work will not go on at the same level.

U.S. Rep. Madeleine Dean, a Pennsylvania Democrat, asked Kennedy at a Wednesday hearing "why the hell" those changes are being made when the steep drop in deaths showed "we were getting somewhere." Some advocates made a similar point in a call with reporters last week.

"We believe that taking a public health approach that seeks to support not punish people who use drugs is crucial to ending the overdose crisis," said Dr. Tamara Olt, an Illinois woman whose 16-year-old son died of a heroin overdose in 2012. She is now executive director of Broken No Moore, an advocacy organization focused on substance use disorder. Olt attributes recent declines to the growing availability of naloxone, work to make treatment available, and wider awareness of the problem.

Kimberly Douglas, an Illinois woman whose 17-year-old son died of an overdose in 2023, credited the growing chorus of grieving mothers. "Eventually people are going to start listening," she said. "Unfortunately, it's taken 10-plus years." □



# Democrats are deeply pessimistic about the future of their party, an AP-NORC poll finds

By **STEVE PEOPLES** and **LINLEY SANDERS**  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Six months after Donald Trump's presidential victory, Democrats remain deeply pessimistic about the future of their party, although neither the Democratic Party nor the Republican Party is viewed favorably by a majority of U.S. adults.

A new poll conducted earlier this month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that only about one-third of Democrats are "very optimistic" or even "somewhat optimistic" about their party's future. That's down sharply from July 2024, when about 6 in 10 Democrats said they had a positive outlook.

"I'm not real high on Democrats right now," said poll respondent Damien Williams, a 48-year-old Democrat from Cahokia Heights, Illinois. "To me, they're not doing enough to push back against Trump."

The poll comes at a critical moment for the Democratic Party, which is desperately seeking momen-



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, of N.Y., right, speaks as Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., left, listens during a news conference to protest cuts in the World Trade Center Health Program on Capitol Hill, Tuesday, May 13, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

tum after losing the White House and both chambers of Congress in last fall's general election. In the survey, Democrats offer mixed reviews for some of their party's best-known elected officials including Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and Rep. Alexan-

dria Ocasio-Cortez, both of New York while reporting significant concerns about how leaders are chosen in the U.S. political system. Williams, a member of the Teamsters union, said he likely won't feel good about his party again "until somebody steps up in terms

of being a leader that can bring positive change an Obama-like figure." Republicans, meanwhile, are slightly more optimistic about the future of the GOP than they were last year.

The poll finds that about half of Republicans, 55%,

are very or somewhat optimistic about their party's future, up from 47% last summer. Still, only about 3 in 10 Republicans are optimistic about the state of U.S. politics, up from about 1 in 10 last summer.

Patrick Reynolds, a 50-year-old Republican community activist and pastor from Fort Worth, Texas, says he has conflicting feelings about Trump's leadership and the future of his party.

He worries that too many Republicans in Congress are falling in line behind the Republican president and his chief ally and adviser, Elon Musk, who has led Trump's push to slash the size of the federal government. Reynolds also says he's concerned that Trump's aggressive moves to combat illegal immigration may be violating the Constitution.

"How can we be the party of the rule of law when we're violating constitutional principles?" Reynolds said. "I think there could be a (political) backlash." Neither political party is especially popular right now. □

## Ex-NYC Mayor de Blasio agrees to pay \$330K for misusing public funds on failed White House bid

By **JAKE OFFENHARTZ**

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Former New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has agreed to pay a \$329,794 fine to settle an ethics board's complaint that he mispent public funds on his security detail during his brief, failed run for U.S. president.

The deal, announced Wednesday by the city's Conflicts of Interest Board, is the costliest repayment order in the ethics board's history.

But it allows de Blasio to avoid an even steeper penalty of \$475,000 that was previously imposed, a reduction the board said came in light of the former mayor's "financial situation."

In exchange, de Blasio agreed to drop his appeal

of the board's finding. And for the first time, he admitted that he received written warning that his out-of-state security expenses could not legally be covered by city taxpayers.

"In contradiction of the

written guidance I received from the Board, I did not reimburse the City for these expenses," de Blasio wrote in the settlement, adding: "I made a mistake and I deeply regret it."

The payments concern

the \$319,794.20 in travel-related expenses including airfare, lodging, meals that de Blasio's security detail incurred while accompanying him on trips across the country during his presidential campaign in 2019. He will also pay a \$10,000 fine.

The campaign elicited a mix of mockery and grousing by city residents, who accused the Democrat of abandoning his duties as second-term mayor for the national spotlight. It was suspended within four months.

Under the agreement, de Blasio must pay \$100,000 immediately, followed by quarterly installments of nearly \$15,000 for the next four years. If he misses a payment, he will be deemed in default and

ordered to pay the full \$475,000.

The funds will eventually make their way back into the city treasury, according to a spokesperson for the Conflicts of Interest Board. An attorney for de Blasio, Andrew G. Celli Jr., declined to comment on the settlement.

De Blasio had previously argued that forcing him to cover the cost of his security detail's travel violated his First Amendment rights by creating an "unequal burden" between wealthy candidates and career public servants.

Since leaving office in 2021, de Blasio has worked as a lecturer at multiple universities, most recently the University of Michigan, and delivered paid speeches in Italy. □



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio speaks at the opening of New York's Wollman Rink in Central Park, Nov. 14, 2021.

Associated Press



# Court rules in favor of The New York Times over texts between the EU chief and a pharma boss

By **SAM McNEIL**  
**Associated Press**

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — A top European court ruled on Wednesday that the European Commission failed to provide a credible explanation for refusing The New York Times access to text messages sent between its President Ursula von der Leyen and a pharmaceutical boss during the COVID-19 pandemic. The case highlights questions about transparency at the commission, which insists that text messages and other “ephemeral” electronic communications do not necessarily constitute documents of interest that should be saved or made public.

“Today’s decision is a victory for transparency and accountability in the European Union, and it sends a powerful message that ephemeral communications are not beyond the reach of public scrutiny,” Nicole Taylor, a spokesperson for The New York Times, said after the court annulled the commission’s decision. According to a statement from the EU’s General Court in Luxembourg, the U.S. newspaper’s lawyers “succeeded



**European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen makes a statement during an official visit to the Pfizer pharmaceutical company in Puurs, Belgium, Friday, April 23, 2021.**

**Associated Press**

in rebutting the presumption of non-existence and of non-possession of the requested documents.” The statement said that “the commission cannot merely state that it does not hold the requested documents but must provide credible explanations enabling the public and the court to understand why those documents cannot be found.”

It said the commission had failed to explain “in a plausible manner” why the messages did not contain important information. It also said the commission “has not sufficiently clarified whether the requested text messages were deleted and, if so, whether the deletion was done deliberately or automatically or whether the president’s mobile phone had been re-

placed in the meantime.” The commission said it would study the ruling and decide on “next steps,” which could refer to an appeal before the European Court of Justice (ECJ), the EU’s top court. It is unclear if the text messages in question still exist, and if so, who has access to them. Von der Leyen was responsible for deciding whether the texts con-

stituted documents of value.

Transparency advocates argue that the EU’s increasingly powerful executive branch should maintain a paper trail of all its dealings and release documents when asked.

“This should serve as a catalyst for the commission to finally change its restrictive attitude to freedom of information,” said Shari Hinds, a policy officer for Transparency International, an anti-corruption group.

Paivi Leino-Sandberg, a law professor at the University of Helsinki who has a pending legal challenge before the same court about the commission’s internal documentation rules, called the news “a huge victory for transparency.”

“The commission lost so completely (in this ruling) and on every possible ground that overturning this in the ECJ seems extremely unlikely,” she said.

The New York Times said text messages were exchanged between von der Leyen and Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla as COVID-19 ravaged communities from Portugal to Finland and the EU scrambled to buy billions of vaccines. □

## Thai officials seize over 200 tons of illegally imported electronic waste from the U.S.

**BANGKOK (AP)** — Thai officials on Wednesday said they seized 238 tons of illegally imported electronic waste from the United States at the port of Bangkok, one of the biggest lots they’ve found this year. The waste, which came in 10 large containers, was declared as mixed metal scrap but turned out to be circuit boards mixed in a huge pile of metal scrap, said Theeraj Athavanich, director-general of the Customs Department. The waste was found on Tuesday after the containers became the subject of a routine random inspection, officials said.

A U.N. report last year said electronic waste is piling up worldwide. Some 62 million tons of electronic waste was generated in 2022 and that figure is on track to reach 82 million tons by 2030, the report said. It said only 22% of the waste was properly collected and recycled in 2022 and that quantity is expected to fall to 20% by the end of the decade due to higher consumption, limited repair options, shorter product life cycles, and inadequate management infrastructure. Theeraj said Thai authorities are looking to press charges including false-

ly declaring imported goods, illegally importing electronic waste and planning to re-export the waste back to its country of origin. “It’s important that we take action on this kind of goods,” he said. “There are environmental impacts that are dangerous to the people, especially communities around factories that might import these things for processing, then recycling.” Electronic waste creates huge health hazards. Many components are laden with lead and mercury, cadmium and other toxins. Recyclers are after gold,

silver, palladium and copper, mainly from printed circuit boards, but lax controls mean that facilities of-

ten burn plastics to release encased copper and use unsafe methods to extract precious metals. □



**A Thai official shows samples of illegally imported electronic waste from the United States which they said they seized at Bangkok Port during a press conference in Bangkok, Thailand, Wednesday, May 14, 2025.**

**Associated Press**



# Brazil's Lula says he would try to urge Putin to 'go to Istanbul and negotiate' with Zelenskyy

**By The Associated Press**

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said Wednesday he would try to urge Russian President Vladimir Putin to attend possible peace talks this week with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy, amid suspense over whether Putin would take part in the proposed meeting in Turkey.

Putin proposed restarting direct talks "without pre-conditions" on Thursday in Istanbul about the more than three-year war. Zelenskyy then challenged the Kremlin leader to meet in Turkey in person.

Lula has maintained close ties with Putin despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine a position that has caused tensions with the Kyiv government and raised eyebrows in the West.

Lula on Wednesday stopped over in Moscow on his return from a state visit in China, where he told journalists: "When I get to Moscow, I'm going to try to talk to Putin. It won't cost me anything to say, 'Hey, comrade Putin, go to Istanbul and negotiate.'"

They did not meet, but the Kremlin said he and Putin spoke by phone. The Krem-



**Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva attends a joint press conference with Chinese President Xi Jinping (not pictured) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, Tuesday, May 13, 2025. Associated Press**

lin said Lula referenced the peace talks and "intends to do everything in his power to ensure their success." It said Putin expressed gratitude for efforts to find ways to resolve the conflict.

The Kremlin did not mention any discussions of Putin's possible travel to Istanbul.

The Kremlin has declined to say who is going to Turkey. Ukraine's presidential ad-

viser, Mykhailo Podolyak, said Zelenskyy will sit at the table only with the Russian leader. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is among U.S. officials due to be in Turkey for the talks.

In May 2024, China and Brazil issued a joint peace plan that called for a peace conference with Russia and Ukraine and no expansion of the battlefield, but

Zelenskyy dismissed it.

On Tuesday, Brazil and China released a joint statement hoping that "a direct dialogue between the parties can begin as soon as possible."

The U.S. and Western European leaders have threatened Russia with further sanctions if there is no progress in halting the fighting in Ukraine.

France's foreign minister said he is working with U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a leading ally of U.S. President Donald Trump, on a potential new package of what he called "devastating" sanctions.

The measures would aim to "asphyxiate once and for all the Russian economy" and squeeze Russia "by the throat," with possible 500% import tariffs on Russian oil and countries that buy it, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said. He told French broadcaster BFMTV he would see Graham on Thursday in Turkey. Sanctions already adopted by Ukraine's allies have failed to stop Putin.

Russian forces have been readying a fresh military offensive to maximize pressure on Ukraine and strengthen the Kremlin's negotiating position, Ukrainian government and military analysts say.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said Tuesday that Russia is "attempting to prolong negotiations to extract additional concessions from the United States and while making additional battlefield advances." □

## 2-year-old girl reunites with her mother in Venezuela after U.S. deportation



**Pro-government supporters hold up signs with the image of Maikelys Espinoza, a 2-year-old in US custody whose parents were deported separately, at a rally in Caracas, Venezuela, Thursday, May 1, 2025. Associated Press**

**CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)**

— A 2-year-old girl arrived Wednesday in Caracas to reunite with her mother after she was separated from her

parents when they were deported from the U.S. in what Venezuela denounced as a kidnapping. Maikelys Espinoza arrived at an airport

outside the capital, Caracas, along with more than 220 deported migrants. Footage aired by state television showed Venezuela's first lady Cilia Flores carrying Maikelys at the airport. Later, Flores was shown handing the girl over to her mother, who had been waiting for her arrival at the presidential palace along with President Nicolás Maduro. The U.S. government had claimed the family separation last month was justified because the girl's parents allegedly have ties to the Venezuelan-based Tren de Aragua gang, which U.S. President Donald Trump designated a terrorist organization earlier this year.

The girl's mother was deported to Venezuela on

April 25. Meanwhile, U.S. authorities sent her father to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador in March under Trump's invocation of an 18th-century wartime law to deport hundreds of immigrants.

For years, the government of Maduro had mostly refused the entry of immigrants deported from the U.S. But since Trump took office this year, hundreds of Venezuelan migrants, including some 180 who spent up to 16 days at the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have been deported to their home country.

The Trump administration has said the Venezuelans sent to Guantanamo and El Salvador are members of the Tren

de Aragua, but has offered little evidence to back up the allegation.

Maduro on Wednesday thanked Trump and his envoy for special missions, Richard Grenell, for allowing Maikelys to reunite with her mother in a "profoundly humane" act. Grenell met with Maduro in Caracas shortly after Trump took office.

"There have been and will be differences, but it is possible, with God's blessing, to move forward and resolve many issues," Maduro said, alluding to the deep divisions between his and Trump's governments. "I hope and aspire that very soon we can also rescue Maikelys' father and the 253 Venezuelans who are in El Salvador." □



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## Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

### California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest point easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

### Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on

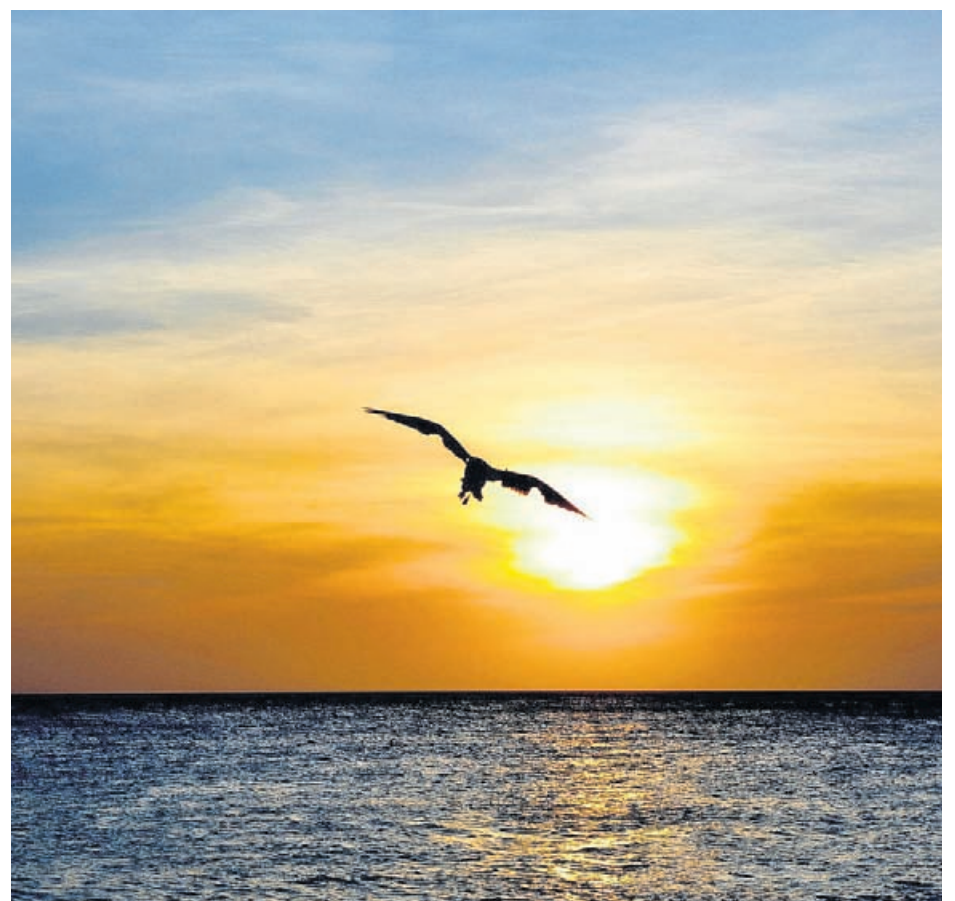
these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!\*

### Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple hue.

### Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this in-



credible scenery.

### Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But

if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell...☐



# Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!



**(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.**

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio

Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and

land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times in the northern part of the island hold such rich



history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserving our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! ☐

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## Aruba Birdlife Conservation: New Homes for two pairs of Shocos

(Oranjestad)—In a powerful display of community-driven conservation and environmental education, the International School of Aruba (ISA) has become the first educational institution on the island to install two artificial burrows for Aruba's beloved and endangered burrowing owl. The Aruba Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*, is an endemic subspecies that, known to locals as "Shoco" can only be found in Aruba. There are only an estimated two hundred pairs left on Planet Earth.

This project all began when two pairs of Shocos had chosen ISA as their nesting ground. While their presence delighted the school

community, their chosen nest sites -dangerously close to areas of daily activity - posed a risk to the birds and caused concerns for the school management.

Recognizing the importance of co-existence and preservation, they reached out to Aruba Birdlife Conservation (ABC) for guidance.

Together with ABC, they agreed to install two artificial burrows in safer, more strategic locations on campus. These man-made burrows, specially designed for Shocos, offer a secure and durable alternative for the vulnerable birds.

In the days leading up to the event, 14 yards of gravel were delivered to the school, a vital component in the construction of the burrows. On Saturday, May 10, at 8.00 a.m. in the morning, teams started arriving with shovels, wheelbarrows, and a bobcat, nest materials and more. One of the nest locations was inaccessible to heavy machinery, required seven yards of gravel to be transported by wheelbarrow—an effort that became a wonderful testament to teamwork. The second burrow, more easily accessed by the bobcat, was completed at a swifter pace.

Following the successful installation came a morning of celebration and ceremony.

Educational integration is already underway at ISA, with biodiversity and Shoco conservation themes being incorporated into the curriculum. This makes the artificial nests not just homes for owls but living classrooms - places where children can witness firsthand the harmony of science, action, and nature.

A new "breakthrough" element in Shoco conservation has been added to the effort. These conservation partners are contributing in a most significant way with among others logistical support, materials,



manpower, awareness and beyond.

The involvement of these partners reflects the growing need for alliance between nature conservation groups and Aruba's tourism sector in building sustainable, community-rooted environmental practices.

One of the collaboration's goals of these "Founding Fathers" is very clear: to raise awareness, instill a culture of care and conservation in Aruba's youth, and ensure that future generations will continue to

share their island including their Shocos.

Aruba Birdlife Conservation commends the International School of Aruba for its visionary. As a part of its national shoco conservation plan placement of hundreds of artificial burrows is an important objective and with these serious and committed partners, we are well on our way.

**Photo credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation.**





## Cas di Torto



**ORANJESTAD - Cas di torto (also called cas di lodo or cas di bara) is a traditional building technique from Aruba. It refers to a type of houses made of mud with rounded corners. These houses were usually found around the plantations. The few structures that still exist are the oldest structures that are left standing in the country.**

The technique probably came over from the Venezuelan Paraguaná Peninsula in the 18th century.

Existing houses date back 150 years. Until 1925 many houses on Aruba were built using this technique, afterwards it fell into disuse. In 2005 there were 62 cas di torto houses left, of which only four were in good condition.

The skeleton of the houses is made up of round wooden poles placed with distances of 1.5 feet between them. Branches are interwoven between them, completing the structural support. On this basis, loam is applied, mixed with sand,



water and para grass. This is then coated with aloe vera juice, which gives the white colour and helps to protect against the weather.

On top of the poles pieces of wood are fitted that serve as the base for the roof beams. Until 1815 the roofing usually consisted of corn (maize) stems, af-

terwards the nuclei of columnar cacti were used. The floor is made of loam, mixed with cement or cow dung.

The houses were usually divided into a kitchen, a living room, a porch and a bedroom. In the kitchen would be a wooden or metal barrel for storing water that

was collected in small rain ponds. Around this barrel a thick loam wall would be erected. Often large families would live in these houses; people would sleep on mats on the floor.

If you visit the Arikok National Park you will be able to see a very nice cas di torto. □

## Meet Aruba's biggest hero Boy Ecury

**(Oranjestad)—This past May 4th, Aruba as well as The Netherlands commemorated those who sadly perished during the Second World War. As is known around the globe, this chapter in world history is one of the most tragic yet, and many soldiers and rebels have died on the frontline during this time.**

One of those rebels who have fought against the Nazi regime, was an Aruban named Segundo Jorge Adelberto "Boy" Ecury. Born in Aruba on April 23rd, 1922, Boy spent his childhood on the island, before being sent to The Netherlands by his father when he was 15 years old to continue his studies abroad. This was in 1937, three years before WWII broke out.

During the war, he actively participated in the rebellion in The Netherlands against the Nazi regime, but his rebellious streak and constant

drive to fight for justice began even before the war broke out. Being a person of color with a Haitian heritage living in The Netherlands made him vulnerable to discrimination, and this inspired him to be an activist, to stand up and fight against discrimination and oppression.

After seeing the horrific bombings of Rotterdam firsthand, he decided to join the resistance. At the same time, he was still studying and living with family in Tilburg. It was there where he met people who printed and distributed the rebellion newspaper. This would be the first of three rebellion groups that he would join throughout his 4-year service to the resistance.

Boy's primary task as member of the group was to distract the German soldiers while others ran into hiding into alleyways. This he was able to do because of his skin color and confronting

demeanor. Boy also participated in the multiple sabotaging operations against the German military occupying The Netherlands. These included bombings on German military trucks and trains. The group also helped people go into hiding, as well as opened fire against allies of the Nazi regime. In these operations, Boy really stood out for his cold bloodedness.

In 1943, he received a notice to be placed for work in Germany. This he refused, of course, and went into hiding using multiple addresses in multiple cities. Because he was a wanted man, he of course could not continue to be active as a rebel. However, stubborn and naturally rebellious as he was, he always tried to join in on the operations regardless.

In 1944, after his friend Luis de Lannoy, a fellow rebel from Curacao, was arrested and executed, he moved



to Delft, where he joined his third and last group in Rotterdam. During this time, he wrote a goodbye letter for his family, possibly knowing the risks of him being active again in the big cities.

Eventually, he proved himself right. On November 5th, 1944, Boy Ecury was arrested by German soldiers. He was placed in the "Oranjarahotel" prison in Scheveningen, The Hague, where he was questioned. Despite being given away by an acquaintance, he himself never gave away the names of his comrades. Famously, he told his cell mate: "I will die with a smile on my face."



On November 6th, 1944, Ecury was executed. He was only 22 years old.

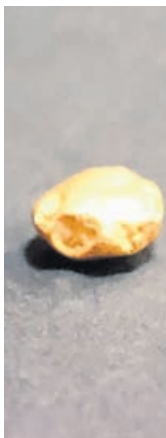
Ecury was buried with military honor. In 1949, the Aruban Government erected a monumental bust of him in front of what is now the linear park trail, and in 1984 he received the Resistance Memorial Cross postmortem.

Boy's life motto was this: "In my father's house, there is no place for a traitor." □

**Source: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.**



## In celebration of 200 years of the Aruban gold rush: Get to know the history of the gold industry on Aruba



**(Oranjestad)—This year we celebrate a few milestone anniversaries on Aruba, one of them being the 200th anniversary of when gold was first discovered on the island. We have talked about the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin before and its brief history during the gold industry on Aruba, but get to know a little more about the history of the “Aruban Gold Rush.”**

The first hint of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when rumors about gold being found in dug up treasure chests of the Spanish colonial era prompted the first official exploration for gold on the island, commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some specks of gold, it was not enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself. It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young farmer boy named Willem Rasmijn found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep in the area of Rooi Fluit on the north coast. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold.

When the colonial governor in Curacao, Governor Cantz'laar, heard about the news, he sent his adjutant, Capitan van Raders, to start harvesting gold. This was in July 1824. In August of that same year, the governor followed suit to the island, accompanied by high-ranking military officials. When citizens started swarming the area in search for gold, The Netherlands sent more troops to safe guard the gold.

Prominent places where gold was found was in Daimari, Wacobana, Arikok, Rooi Fluit, Hadicouradi and later West punt, where gold ore was found. Because of a lack in advanced technology and materials to harvest the gold, the process took a more primitive approach: Clay rocks containing traces of gold were left to dry in the sun. Then, workers would start chipping the clay away on a large canvas to catch the gold particles that were left behind after the wind blew away the dust from the clay.

In the harvest period of 1824-1825, there was a total of 71,000 kilos collected through commissioned harvesting. Locals themselves reportedly found about 25 pounds worth of gold in the nearby rivers. The following years after that first big harvest, commission work fell off, and in 1828, the director of the goldmines, Johan Gravenhorst, decided to halt harvesting.

Almost 40 years later, the London-based Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was granted concession. The firm built their gold mines on Bushiribana, and in the port of Oranjestad a long road that connected the gold mill to the port. The ores themselves came from Sero Plat en Sero Cristal.

By this point, workers were still using primitive methods to harvest the ores. For example, when someone had to go into the mines, there were no stairs or lifts; the person had to be brought down in a big bucket, with two or more workers holding the bucket by a thick rope above ground. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. reportedly operated until 1899, and right after the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. was established, coincidentally also based in London. This time, the gold mill in Balashi was built, and more mines were dug up all around the island. The gold ores that were found were transported via track engine, locally called the “trekinchi”. Despite being more equipped for the job, the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. could not produce any real profit, and so the concession was terminated just eight years later, in 1908.

A local firm, the “Aruba Goud Maatschappij” (Aruba Gold Company) took over the concession, along with all the materials and equipment. In the beginning, the company saw good profit, and for a while, the island's economy depended primarily on the mining and harvesting of gold. But just like its predecessors, the streak of luck for the Aruba Gold Company came to an end when WWI broke out.

The main reason why production stopped this time was reportedly because of a lack in dynamite for extracting the ores from the mines, as well as a lack in raw materials like German cyanide for the refining process. By the time the war ended, the equipment that was left at Balashi were too old to use again. After the war, gold production on the Aruba was left to a standstill.

According to an issue in Aruba Esso News paper in 1953, Henny Eman wanted to start up digging again, this time using independent miners. He argued that there was proof of more gold to be discovered. Plus, hiring independent miners would boost the island's employment rate.

When it was proven that gold was in fact still present, the executive board on the island promised to fund the project only if the gold dug up proved to be valuable. However, nothing else was reported after this, so it could be concluded that there was no real profitable market on the island anymore.

The ruins of the Bushiribana and Balashi Gold Mills are still standing, and open for the public to visit. These structures offer a glance into the past, to a time where Aruba experienced one of its first wave of industrialization. Today, these structures are persevered as historical monuments. □

Source:

1. “De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)” by Evert Bongers.
2. Aruba Esso News, 1953 issue.



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

- 1 Isolated  
6 Fuses  
11 Sub  
12 Plain to see  
13 Rho follower  
14 Copycat's cry  
15 Before, to bards  
16 Sch. support group  
18 Quill need  
19 Musical note  
20 Play on words  
21 Player's peg  
22 New York's — Island  
24 Encircle  
25 Latte preparer  
27 Speedy horse  
29 Missouri motto  
32 Not neg.  
33 Dessert choice  
34 Galloped  
35 — Alamos  
36 "2001" computer  
37 Company abbr.  
38 Psi follower

- 40 Mortensen of "Green Book"  
42 Tiny amounts  
43 Clear sky  
44 Enter-tainer  
45 Raison —

## DOWN

- 1 Rate  
2 Belgian sleuth  
3 "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" co-star  
4 Zodiac animal  
5 Fur trader  
6 Grown girl  
7 Second person  
8 "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" co-star  
9 Tiresome talker  
10 Excited  
17 Libya neighbor  
23 Bar bill  
24 Car in a 1964 song  
26 Put on hold  
27 Poise  
28 Dorm sharer  
30 Crèche part  
31 Concert bonus  
33 Full moon, for one  
39 Acquire  
41 Mineral suffix

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11						12			
13						14			
15				16	17			18	
19				20				21	
22			23				24		
25						26			
27	28				29			30	31
32				33				34	
35				36				37	
38			39			40	41		
42						43			
44						45			

5-19

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-19

## CRYPTOQUOTE

QFG'PM SFU T BUTP GSUEA

UJMQ LTS BYMAA QFGP STKM

ES NTPTLJE. — JGKYJPMQ

IFVTPU

**Cryptoquote:** IT IS SPRING AGAIN.  
THE EARTH IS LIKE A CHILD THAT KNOWS  
POEMS BY HEART. — RAINER MARIA RILKE

A	D	H	O	C		B	I	G	O	T
P	E	A	B	O		A	D	O	R	E
T	E	N	O	R		G	L	O	B	E
						G	E	O	R	G
B	E	T				N	A	Y		C
A	R	I	S	E	N				N	A
N	I	G	H	T		F	L	I	G	H
A	C	H	Y			R	U	P	E	E
L	A	T				S	O	N		F
						K	I	M	C	H
T	O	P	A	Z					H	A
I	R	A	T	E					E	T
C	E	D	E	S					S	E

## Cruise ship Schedule: May 13 - 20 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH		
TUE	13	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	23.00	B	1	
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1	
WED	14	FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1	
THU	15	CARNIVAL VENEZIA	09.00	22.00	C	1	
SUN	18	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1	
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-	
TUE	20	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	07.00	16.00	B	1	
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	C	1	

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

### Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

### Drinking water

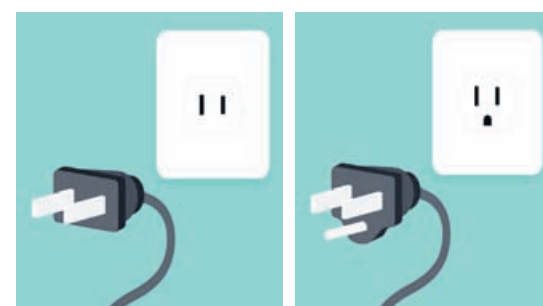
The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

### Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

### Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.





# FDA and RFK Jr. aim to remove ingestible fluoride products used to protect kids' teeth

By **MATTHEW PERRONE**

AP Health Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — U.S. health regulators announced an effort Tuesday to phase out ingestible fluoride supplements sometimes used to strengthen children's teeth, opening a new front in Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s effort against a mainstay of dental care.

The Food and Drug Administration said it will conduct a scientific review of the children's products by late October with the aim of removing them from the market. Formally withdrawing medical products requires a lengthy rulemaking process that can take years. Instead, the FDA will ask manufacturers to voluntarily pull their products, according to an administration official.

Fluoride tablets and lozenges are sometimes recommended for children and teens at increased risk of tooth decay or cavities because of low fluoride in their local drinking water. Companies also sell drops for babies. FDA Commissioner Marty Makary said the products pose a risk when swallowed because they may interfere with healthy gut bacteria that are critical to digestion, immunity and other key



**A child shows off her teeth after a dental exam in Concord, N.H., Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024.**

Associated Press

bodily functions. He also referenced studies showing possible associations between excess fluoride intake and other problems, including decreased IQ. The nation's leading dental group said Tuesday the studies "do not in fact demonstrate any harmful effects" from fluoride at the levels used by dentists. "Proposals like this stand to hurt rural America, not make them healthier," American Dental Association President Dr. Brett Kessler said. "More than ever, at this critical time in American health care policy, it is vital that we slow down to properly study the full implications of actions like this on the health of the nation." Officials in

Utah the first U.S. state to ban fluoride from drinking water recently made fluoride supplements available without a prescription. As more state and local governments begin removing fluoride from their water, the need for supplemental fluoride is expected to grow. □

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Walk-In Doctor's Clinic  
+297 588 0539

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# Patricia Clarkson on playing her icon Lilly Ledbetter and the political moment greeting the movie

By **ALEXANDRA OLSON**

AP Business Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The film “Lilly,” a biopic about the equal pay icon Lilly Ledbetter, lands in theaters at a difficult time for her biggest political and civil rights champions.

Many are gone or out of power, their hopes of building on Ledbetter’s legacy interrupted by a more fundamental fight over President Donald Trump’s shake-up of civil rights institutions.

It’s difficult not to flash-forward to the present as the most famous of those supporters appear in interspersed documentary footage: the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former first lady Michelle Obama and former President Barack Obama, who signed the 2009 Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which strengthened the right of workers to sue for pay discrimination.

Less well-known is Jocelyn Samuels, played as a key character by Deirdre Lovejoy. Back then, Samuels was an executive at the National Women’s Law Center, guiding Ledbetter through the halls of Congress as they lobbied for the law. Currently, Samuels is one of two Democratic commissioners fired by Trump from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,



This image released by Blue Harbor Entertainment shows Patricia Clarkson as Lilly Ledbetter in a scene from “Lilly.”

an unprecedented power play she is fighting in a lawsuit. Ledbetter died in October at the age of 86. The following month, Trump’s election all but dashed Democratic hopes for passage any time soon of the more comprehensive Paycheck Fairness Act, which Ledbetter championed and would, among other measures, strengthen the ability of the EEOC to investigate pay discrimination. Patricia Clarkson, who stars as Ledbetter in “Lilly,” doesn’t shy away from the politics of the film, directed by Rachel Feldman. The Academy Award-nominee shared the red carpet with Clinton, who made a surprise appearance at the

film’s May 7 premier in New York City.

She often recalls how her own mother, the late former Louisiana state legislator Jackie Clarkson, cried for joy when learning her daughter would play Ledbetter.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Clarkson said the politics are a salient backdrop for what people should remember most: The resilience of a woman, who for most of her life, was an unknown working mother until an anonymous note tipped her off that her male co-workers were getting paid thousands of dollars more for the same job, and she decided to fight back. The conversation has been

edited for brevity and clarity.

**Q: What did you do to prepare for the role? I understand you never met Lilly Ledbetter and it that it was an intentional choice.**

**A:** I imprint very easily with people and so I was afraid if I met Lilly, I would try to imitate her, play her. I realized that I owed her the very best of me as an actress, as a woman and a person. And the way to do that is to bring the best of you and to bring the best of yourself emotionally and physically and intellectually. And you can’t do that if you are living with such an image. And Lilly is a very powerful image in my life. And so I had to kind of just

bring her back to an ordinary life.

**Q: Did you dig into her writings or her speeches?**

**A:** I looked at a certain amount ... But I wanted her emotional life ever-present ... That’s what’s important because change is hard and people suffer to fight injustice .... I didn’t care about mannerisms. I just wanted her emotional strife and struggle to be present.

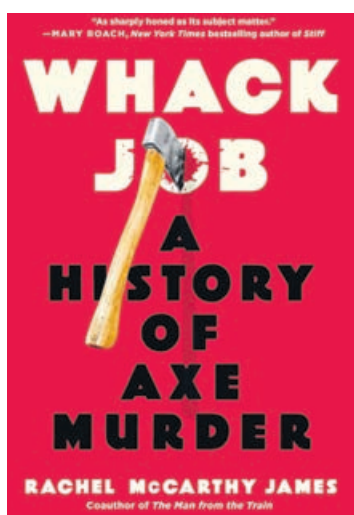
**Q: It must have been hard to anticipate how different the political moment would be when the movie was released.**

**A:** I literally and figuratively had dreams of being on a press tour with Lilly. It was going to be the highlight of my life to be with this remarkable human being ... but then she passed. But maybe right now, is the greatest time for this film because it’s reminding people that there can be accomplishments.

**Q: Is it a more difficult political climate for a film like this?**

**A:** I know the Democrats embraced her but let me tell you something: Lilly was not really a deeply political person, and that’s something I held strong to ... And yeah, she spoke at the (Democratic National Convention) but she would have spoken at the (Republican National Convention) if she has been asked. Equal pay is equal pay. □

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This cover image released by St. Martin’s Press shows “Whack Job: A History of Axe Murder” by Rachel McCarthy James.

Associated Press

## Book Review: ‘Whack Job’ tells the story of a simple survival tool turned murder weapon

By **FERNANDA FIGUEROA**

Associated Press

From the murder of a Neanderthal-like man to the infamous Lizzie Borden, “Whack Job: A History of Axe Murder” provides a sarcastic, witty and quirky look at the history of a rather simple tool often found at the scene of a crime: an axe.

Rachel McCarthy James spends each chapter of “Whack Job” detailing an instance where “axe murder” has occurred, but for true crime fans the book might not make the cut.

Instead of looking at the gory details and dramatizing events, James examines the social-economic, political issues and human nature that caused these individuals to befall their fate to an axe. As such, the book, while having

a true crime element, is ultimately a history crash course on the axe’s evolution from a survival tool in 430,000 BCE to a modern-day weapon of murder.

Still, this is what makes the book intriguing even if, like me, you were hoping it would dive deeper into the axe murder itself.

James has fun with the topic, describing what makes the axe the perfect weapon in each instance, keeping the true crime fan in me thoroughly engaged.

A book such as this, focused on history and facts, could become tedious to a casual reader, but James knows how to disarm readers with properly timed humor and quippy theories.

True crime fan or not, James’ book is a great primer of “axe murder” in all its shapes and forms. □



# The PGA Championship's identity might be that it has no identity at all

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

The PGA Championship for years has been the major that lacked an identity compared with the other three.

The Masters is at Augusta National, the only major held at the same course every year. The British Open has links golf. The U.S. Open loves its reputation as the toughest test in golf.

And the PGA Championship?

"The other one," Geoff Ogilvy once said in a blend of humor and honesty.

Another former U.S. Open champion, Graeme McDowell, was posed the same question years ago and he settled on "the fourth major."

But as the 107th edition of this major starts Thursday at Quail Hollow, boasting 99 of the top 100 players in the world ranking, two-time major champion Jon Rahm raised the idea that the identity of the PGA Championship might be that it has no identity at all.

With so much variety 74 courses since it began at Siwanoy in New York in 1916



**Xander Schauffele hits from the rough on the 15th hole during a practice round for the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club, Wednesday, May 14, 2025, in Charlotte, N.C.**

Associated Press

players aren't always sure what to expect.

"When you go to Augusta, you know what you're getting same course every year," Rahm said. "The U.S. Open, nine times out of 10 you know what you're getting depending on weather. Same thing with The Open, right?"

"It's this championship that

we change venues and drastically change the way we set it up."

Bethpage Black in 2019 was a beast. A wet week at Valhalla produced the lowest score in PGA Championship history last year. No more than a dozen players finished under par at Southern Hills (2022) and Oak Hill (2023).

"You get different things every time you come," Rahm said. "It's very difficult to say that two of them are the same."

The U.S. Open goes to Oakmont next month, regarded as a classic course for the second-oldest championship and one of the toughest in America. Justin Thomas, who won the PGA

Championship at Quail Hollow in August 2017 and at Southern Hills in May 2022, was asked what he would consider a classic PGA Championship venue.

"I don't think there is," Thomas said. "And I think that's what is kind of cool and unique about this event."

Gene Sarazen would have preferred otherwise.

Sarazen won his PGAs, when it was match play, at Oakmont (1922), Pelham in New York (1923) and Blue Mound in Wisconsin (1933). And he was concerned that it was getting left behind in terms of prestige.

The great "Squire" the first player to take ownership of the career Grand Slam in 1935 was at Firestone Country Club in Ohio for the 1966 PGA Championship.

It had been played at Laurel Valley in Pennsylvania the year before and was headed to Columbine in Colorado the next year.

"I think that if the PGA Championship is ever going to attain the stature of the U.S. Open or Masters, it must be given a permanent home," Sarazen said. □

## Pedersen makes it 3 wins out of 5 at Giro d'Italia to extend his overall lead

**MATERA, Italy (AP) —** Overall leader Mads Pedersen made it three wins out of five at this year's Giro d'Italia as he won a bunch sprint at the end of the fifth stage on Wednesday.

Pedersen just managed to edge out Edoardo Zambanini in a finish that was so close the Lidl-Trek rider had to ask a teammate: "Did I win? Are you sure?"

Tom Pidcock was third at the end of the 151-kilometer (94-mile) route from Ceglie Messapica to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Matera, which is renowned for its "Sassi," or ancient cave dwellings.

The 29-year-old Pedersen also won two of the three opening stages in Albania

to take the leader's pink jersey back to Italy.

"Now it's really incredible and to win in this jersey as well, it's insane and it's way more than I ever dreamt about," Pedersen said. "What a Giro we have and what a team I have around me."

With the bonus seconds Pedersen picked up, the Danish cyclist extended his lead over pre-race favorite Primož Roglič to 17 seconds, with Mathias Vacek another seven seconds back.

With a kilometer to go, Pedersen appeared too far back but he managed to get up to the front before a late corner and then got a great lead out

from Vacek.

Pedersen then launched his final sprint early and just barely held off Zambanini, who almost managed to beat him after coming up along the barriers.

"I used a lot of energy to move back up on Vacek's wheel," Pedersen said. "I had to spend energy to come back to at least fight for the win. Then luckily I had enough for the last sprint. So that was a really tough one."

Prior to this year's race, Pedersen had only won one stage in the Giro, two years ago in Naples where Thursday's sixth stage also ends. "Every day we try to win as as much as possible and we try again tomorrow," he said.

The stage is the longest leg of the three-week race and has two categorized

climbs on the 227-kilometer route from Potenza.

The Giro ends in Rome on June 1. □



**Denmark's Mads Pedersen, in the pink jersey, sprints to win the fifth stage of the Giro d'Italia cycling race from Ceglie Messapica to Matera, Italy, Wednesday, May 14, 2025.**

Associated Press



# Rory McIlroy says Masters might be the highlight of his career regardless of what's next

By **DOUG FERGUSON**  
AP Golf Writer

**CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)** — Rory McIlroy has everything he dreamed of doing when he first fell in love with golf. He reached No. 1 in the world and when he finally captured the Masters last month, he had his place in history with the career Grand Slam. Setting his next target might be the toughest challenge.

"I'm still going to set myself goals. I'm still going to try to achieve certain things. But I sit here knowing that very well could be the highlight of my career," McIlroy said. "That's a very cool thing. I want to still create a lot of other highlights and high



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, watches his tee shot on the second hole during a practice round for the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club, Tuesday, May 13, 2025, in Charlotte, N.C.

Associated Press

points, but I'm not sure if any other win will live up to what happened a few weeks ago."

Only one other Sergio Garcia played the Masters more times before winning. No other player went 11 years before getting the final leg of the Grand Slam. The emotion pouring out of McIlroy that Sunday at Augusta National captured the essence of dreams coming true.

He doesn't spend a lot of time watching that moment because he wants to remember the feeling instead of getting caught up in the visuals of it.

So what's next?

Johnny Miller was once among the brightest comets in golf when he shot 63 in the final round to win the U.S. Open at Oakmont, when he shot 66 on the final day at Royal Birkdale to overtake a 19-year-old Spaniard named Seve Ballesteros and when he won just about every tournament in the desert.

The next Jack Nicklaus? It never worked out that way as priorities at home changed.

"When I got to the mountaintop, I kind of looked at the scenery and wondered, 'Now what?'" Miller once said. "When Jack got there, he said, 'Where's the next mountain.'"

Perhaps one Mount Everest might be the calendar Grand Slam, a feat never accomplished (Tiger Woods held all four major trophies over two years).

The PGA Championship starts Thursday at Quail Hollow, where McIlroy won last year on the PGA Tour for the fourth time.

"I would argue he's the best driver of the ball I've ever seen, and that is extremely important here," said Justin Thomas, who won the PGA Championship at Quail Hollow in 2017. The U.S. Open is at Oakmont, and the British Open returns to Royal Portrush, home soil for McIlroy where he has a score to settle from missing the cut there in 2019. □



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